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Only the CIA knows what really went on at Ashford Farms

By H. JOOST POLAK
[Salisbury Bureau of The Sun]

Bellevue, Md., Oct. 28 — A gas station attendant in nearby Royal Oak, says he counted this waterfront Hamlet in Talbot county may be the "safe house" to which the Central Intelligence Agency brought a high ranking defector from the Soviet intelligence service two weeks ago for a long "debriefing session."

Ashford Farms, a 100-acre estate acquired by the Government about 1950, was used in February, 1962, as a hideaway for the downed U-2 pilot, Francis Gary Powers, after his return to the United States.

Exposed Spy Rings

Informed sources in Washington say that either Ashford Farms or a similar facility in northern Virginia is likely to have been the site chosen for the interrogation of Evgey Evgenievich Runge, a defector from the agency's Soviet counterpart, the KGB.

Colonel Runge's defection in West Berlin earlier this month exposed two major spy rings in West Germany.

The Washington sources say Colonel Runge, 39, and his wife and son were flown to the United States on the weekend of October 14-15, then whisked away to a hiding place.

Residents of this area say a "meeting" was held at Ashford Farms on October 15, and one

headed toward the estate that afternoon. The estate, near the end of Benoni Point on the Ferryneck Peninsula that juts into the Tred Avon River across from Oxford, has been a source of mystery since the Government bought it from Charles S. Todd for a reported \$65,000.

Known As "The Factory"

The three-story, fourteen-room house is one of the few large brick buildings in the area, and is known as "the factory" because of the imposing facade it presents to passing watermen.

Neighbors say it was built in 1930 at a cost of over \$75,000 by Bruce Naylor, who then owned the property, and was bought during the 1940's by the boxer, Gene Tunney in a sale that was later disallowed by the county circuit court.

The house, bristling with chimneys and aials, sits back in pine woods on a circular gravel drive. Its entrance is

guarded by a chain-link fence and gate on which a red, white, and blue shield advises that it is Government property and warns against trespassing.

A huge German shepherd named Eric is the only apparent sentinel. Two cars, one with Maryland plates, and one with District of Columbia tags, are parked beside the house.

Refuses To Answer

A Negro, apparently the caretaker, is the only person visible on the estate. He refuses to answer questions, and says there is no one else in the house.

The CIA will not comment "one way or the other" on Ashford Farms or its possible connection with the Runge case and there is little to be learned about the estate from its neighbors.

They say the house is usually deserted except for the caretaker, whom they identify as William Jenkins, of Royal Oak, and a second workman named Philip Logan.